SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member. I am sorry, you travel everyday but, probably, you travel only between Chennai and Delhi. That is why, you are not aware as to how much of infrastructure upgradation is taking place all across the country. (*Interruptions*) No, no. I did not say that. There is no inference about Chennai. I am saying that an infrastructure upgradation programme is going across all over the country within whatever resources are there. Thirty-five non-metro airports, we have mentioned in the past, are being upgraded and many smaller airports, which are not even in the thirty-five non-metro airports, are also being upgraded. Chennai is going to be upgraded. There was some issue of land on which the State Government has now agreed. Everywhere this programme is going on. I would also like to inform the Members that in many airports where we are willing to spend the money, the State Governments have not been able to give us ten acres or twenty acres of additional land which also comes in the way of expansion and modernisation. So, please, I would appreciate that all Members should also join us in supporting the programme by helping us, through the State Governments, and getting us the additional infrastructure requirements. (*Interruptions*) I don't want to enter into an argument. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI N. JOTHI: Your airports are looking like bus stands. ..(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: In the name of the concerns of the common man, I think, all of us should be happy that our airports are looking like bus stands. At least, the common man is flying. Why are we ignoring that fact and how do you want us to stop the growth of aviation in the name of the airports being less crowded? I think, it is a natural phenomenon. You should appreciate that. You cannot have everything at one time. It is leading towards infrastructure development because there is a growth in aviation. The pressure is there, and we are doing everything possible.

Acute shortage of small coins

*45. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that there is at present acute shortage of small coins in a number of city markets and commuters/consumers are facing acute shortage of coins at the hands of bus conductors, taxi and scooter drivers and vendors of daily necessities;

(b) whether the shortage is very sudden; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to address the problem?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) There have been some reports as well as complaints from public/trade bodies regarding shortage of coins in certain markets. The Reserve Bank of India has reported that the shortage is being felt for the last one year. The following steps have been taken to address the problem:

(i) The Government has been minting Rs. 2 coins in Ferritic Stainless Steel (FSS) instead of curpro-nickel since 2005 and has also decided to mint Rs. 5 coin in Ferritic Stainless Steel instead of curpro-nickel.

(ii) Minting of Rs. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 coins has been placed on fast track. Several issue offices of Reserve Bank of India held coin melas, distributed coins through mobile banks at market place etc. Reserve Bank of India has also advised select currency chest branches to do the same.

(iii) To cater to the large demand of hotels, restaurants, retail shops etc., distribution arrangements have been made through registered Association/Trade bodies wherever they have come forward for the purpose.

(iv) In Mumbai, arrangements have been made for distribution of coins through five post offices and similar arrangement is being put in place in other States.

(v) All the Banks have been advised to ensure distribution of coins through their currency chest branches proactively and they have also been advised to identify some branches in each district for the specific purpose of coin distribution.

(vi) Banks have been advised to consider installation of coin vending machines.

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Sir, I have seen the answer given by the Minister very extensively. But the question that I have asked is, the cause for the shortage. That question has not been answered. If you want to answer that question first, it is all right. Then I will ask my second supplementary. I want to know one thing. Why is there shortage of coins?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, there is adequate inventory of coins in the mints. The RBI places indents upon the mints and directs delivery from the inventory to various issuing offices, currency chest etc. For example, as of 31 st of July, we have nearly 500 million pieces of Re. 1 coin, 290 million pieces of Rs. 2 coin, 18 million pieces of Rs. 5 coin and 17 million pieces of ...(*Interruption*)... Therefore, there is no shortage of coins in the inventory. The shortage is being felt in the banks, in the currency chests and the issuing offices. Now, I have asked the RBI why is there adequate number of coins in the mints and why is there a shortage in the issuing offices? It appears that in 2005-06 and in 2006-07, there was, in fact, a reverse flow of coins to the currency chest. According to the RBI and their estimate, there is excessive supply to demand. For example, in the second half of 2005-06, 107 million pieces of Re. 1 coin came back to the currency chest; 66 million pieces of Rs. 5 coin came back to the currency chest. That perhaps is the reason why in pockets of India, shortages emanated. Since the beginning of 2006-07, the RBI has taken corrective action. Now, the flow is a positive flow. For example, in the first half of 2006-07, they have already lifted and released 239 million pieces, and in the second half of 2006-07, they have lifted and released 917 million pieces. The RBI has assured me that shortages which have been noticed in Maharashtra, Karnataka, the North-East and Orissa, will be addressed over the next 4 to 6 weeks.

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Sir, if what the hon. Minister says is correct, then I do not understand why this shortage is there. You did say that, but you have not given it in specific words. You are saying that the money is there. There are coins

and the RBI has given a specific answer to you on that score. But, why are the coins not available in the market?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: As I tried to explain, certain issuing offices and certain currency chests, they may have made a wrong estimate of the demand in that area. Therefore, they are correcting that by increasing the supply to those currency chests. This has been corrected substantially. There are still some pockets in which this mismatch is to be corrected, and this mismatch is being corrected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ajay Maroo...(*Interruption*).

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Sir, I have not asked my second supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already asked your second question.

श्री अजय मारू: महोदय, अभी मंत्री महोदय ने अपने जवाब में कहा कि ...**(व्यवधान)**

श्रीमती जया बच्चन: सर, आपने तो मुझे सैकंड सप्लीमैंटरी पूछने का मौका ही नहीं दिया।

श्री सभापति: आपने दो सवाल पूछ लिए हैं ...**(व्यवधान)**

श्रीमती जया बच्चन: नही, सर। अभी मैंने एक ही सवाल पूछा है ...**(व्यवधान)**

श्री अजय मारू: महोदय, कई ऐसे प्रदेश हैं, जहां पर अभी भी सिक्कों की कमी है, जिसमें मेरा प्रदेश झारखंड, साथ ही उड़ीसा, पश्चिमी बंगाल और बिहार भी आते हैं। इन सभी प्रदेशों में हमने सिक्कों की कमी महसूस की है। झारखंड जैसे प्रदेश में इस कमी का एक प्रमुख कारण है कि सिक्कों को गला कर उसे धातु के रूप में उपयोग किया जाता है। झारखंड में ऐसे कई किस्से सामने आए हैं। पुलिस ने पुरूलिया, जो पश्चिमी बंगाल में आता है, वहां पर भी कई ऐसे स्थानों पर छापे मारे हैं, जहां पर सिक्कों को गलाया जा रहा है।

मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या यह बात सही है या नहीं है? क्या मंत्री महोदय के ध्यान में यह आया है कि सिक्कों को गलाकर उसे अन्य प्रकार के उपयोग में लाया जा रहा है?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, he is right. We have received reports of coins being melted because earlier, they were curpro-nickel coins, coins made out of copper and nickel. We have since changed the metal to FSS (Ferritic Stainless Steel). The earlier coins which were made of curpro-nickel, reports have come of being melted, reports have come of some coins being smuggled. But that is an issue which has to be addressed as a larger issue of law and order. But today, we have switched over to FSS coins. FSS coins, I don't think there is a chance of melting FSS coins because there is no advantage in melting FSS coins.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Robert Kharshiing. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Sir, this is not the first time that we are facing this shortage. In 1980s, there was shortage of coins. Shortage was there earlier also. Sir, I do not know whether the Finance Minister is aware of the fact that hoarding is taking place. And black marketing is also being done. The hon. Member from Chhattisgarh has stated that melting is also taking place. Sir, whether the hon. Finance Minister has made an assessment so far as the shortage of coins is

concerned; this is part (a) of my question. Then, Sir, part (b) is whether he has taken any steps to take action against these hoarders; whether the hon. Finance Minister has taken steps to address the problem, and whether he has taken the assistance of Railways to supply these coins to the remote areas, particularly the rural areas. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, the only reason for possible hoarding could be, if there is an advantage, if there is an opportunity to make a gain, for melting the coins. As long as the coins were curpro-nickel coins, there were cases of melting, there were reports of melting; I do not deny that. But, then, this is, as I said, a law and order issue which has to be addressed by the law and order agencies of the State Government and the Central Government. RBI is responsible for distributing the coins. RBI's attention has been drawn, on a number of occasions, to shortages which have shown up in some parts of the country. RBI has admitted that shortages have shown up in some parts of the country. They have taken corrective steps, and certainly, I will pass on the suggestion of the hon. Member that RBI should liaise with the Ministry of Railways to see that coins are transported to remote parts of the country so that the banks and the currency chest branches in those parts of the country are also adequately replenished. I shall certainly pass on the suggestion to the RBI.

श्री अमर सिंह: माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगा कि आपके संज्ञान में क्या यह है कि कुछ स्मॉल ऑपरेटर लोग सिक्कों को पिघला कर अधिक मूल्य प्राप्त करने के लिए उसे बाजार में बेच रहे हैं, साथ ही उसे बांग्लादेश में भेज रहे हैं। अगर इस तरह की कोई घटना हुई है तो क्या उनकी गिरफ्तारी हुई है?

क्या आपने सिक्के बनाने के लिए कोई अन्य विकल्प खोजा है कि सिक्के ऐल्युमिनियम, सिलिकॉन या फाइबर से बनाए जाएं? इस तरह से सिक्कों को पिघला कर उसका ज्यादा मूल्य प्राप्त करने का कार्य कुछ फर्जी लोगों ने चला रखा है, विशेष रूप से कोलकाता में इस प्रकार के गिरोह हैं। क्या इस प्रकार के किसी गिरोह के बारे में आपको कोई जानकारी है अथवा आपने इस संबंध में कुछ गिरफ्तारियां की हैं? या जैसे आपने स्वयं अभी माना है कि आपके मंत्रालय ने गलत estimation किया, इसलिए सिक्कों की इस तरह से unavailability है, तो क्या आपके मंत्रालय ने यह भी आपके संज्ञान में नहीं डाला है कि कुछ फर्जी लोग इस तरह से सिक्कों को पिघला कर के चोरी का काम कर रहे हैं?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I have already answered it and I am happy to answer again. Yes, there were reports of melting of coins. That is when the coins were curpro-nickel coins. We replaced curpro-nickel coins by ferritic stainless steel coins and, therefore, I think the opportunity or arbitrage opportunity for melting stainless steel coins will not arise. Action has been taken against people who have been suspected of melting. But these are within the powers of the State and the law and order agencies of the Central Government. I don't have any information about specific cases being filed against anyone. But this information has come to our knowledge and one of the reasons why we switched over from curpro-nickel to FSS is because we wanted to avoid the opportunity to melt these coins.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 46. (*Interruptions*).. Please. Shrimati Sushma Swaraj. (*Interruptions*)..

श्री विनय कटियारः सर, एक मिनट ...**(व्यवधान)**... दो रुपए के सिक्के पर से महात्मा गांधी जी गायब हो गये, तो उसमें यह निशान किसका है ...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, (*Interruptions*)... Q. No. 46.

श्री विनय कटियारः क्या माननीय मंत्री जी बताएँगे कि यह क्या है? ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री सभापतिः क्वैश्चन न. 46।

डुप्लीकेट पैन कार्डों को रद्द किया जाना

*46. **श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराजः** क्या **वित्त मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) क्या यह सच है कि 13 लाख डुप्लीकेट पैन काड्र्स रद्द किए जा रहे हैं;

(ख) डुप्लीकेट पैन काड्र्स को रोकने के लिए बायोमैट्रिक पैन काड्र्स कब तक जारी किए जाएंगे; और

(ग) क्या बायोमैट्रिक पैन काड्र्स जारी होने पर मौजूदा पैन काड्र्स भी मान्य होंगे?

वित्तमंत्री (श्री पी. चिदम्बरम): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) डी–डुप्लीकेशन से संबंधित कार्रवाई पूरी होने के उपरांत ही उन डुप्लीकेट पैन कार्डों की कुल संख्या, जिन्हें रद्द किए जाने की संभावना है, का पता चल सकेगा। अब तक कर–निर्धारण अधिकारियों द्वारा 11.43 लाख पैन धारकों के संबंध में डी–डुप्लीकेशन की कार्रवाई पूरी की जा चुकी है।

(ख) यह मामला विचाराधीन है, किन्तु इस समय उस समय सीमा का उल्लेख करना सम्भव नहीं होगा कि कब तक बायोमैट्रिक पैन काड्र्स जारी किए जाएंगे।

(ग) जी, हाँ। परवर्ती स्कीम के लागू होने के पश्चात् जब तक पैन कार्ड धारक/धारिती अपने पैन कार्ड को नए बायोमैट्रिक कार्ड से बदल नहीं लेता/लेती है।

Cancellation of duplicate PAN cards

†*46. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 13 lakh duplicate PAN cards are being cancelled;

(b) by when the Biometric PAN cards will be issued in order to check duplicate PAN cards; and

(c) whether current PAN cards will be valid even after the issuance of Biometric PAN cards?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.